

WALL OF FUN
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Wall of Fun
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Cor 1 10:7: Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

To Men without Mothers

Chapter 1

As they sat opposite each other inside the Orchard Hotel, Charlie said in a low voice to his friend: "They want me to go to the Wall of Fun, you know."

"Really," replied Dexter, then after a pause, as if surprised, he asked him: "When did you hear about this?"

"I got an e-mail from the Bureau, last night."

"You know what happens there, don't you?"

"Yes."

Charlie looked at his friend as if he would help him. However, Dexter said nothing. Charlie should have known better: for Dexter was a civil servant. His poker face never revealed anything to anyone. He was a man with an unfriendly manner, no matter where he was. Even in his own time, when they were out together sitting outside a cafe, or inside a hotel bar, it was hard to get a spontaneous reaction from him.

Dexter was relatively new to Glasgow. On the other hand, Charlie knew the city inside out. They got to know each other a few years ago, after meeting at the library in town one afternoon. What initially drew them together was an interest in the theatre. Dexter at that time was reading a book on how to write a play. Of course, Charlie having been on stage spoke to him about this. It

was a strange relationship, but somehow they kept in touch. Every Thursday, they went to the same hotel bar on the south side of the city for a drink. They stopped speaking about the theatre a long time ago, though. I guess like everyone else they just liked to catch up with things going on in the world.

In the digital age, it was good to get out of the house, away from desktop computers, home surveillance, corporate pornography. It is fair to say that even though there was nowhere to hide now in the modern world, most citizens did not feel they were being tracked - even though they were. In society, it was accepted that cameras picked you up on the street, wherever you went, but most people dismissed them. The only thing really you had to worry about in the computer age was if someone made a charge against you, based on surveillance. When this happened, you got a letter in the post from the relevant authority. It was at that point computers came into play: for camera, or computer, evidence could be used against you.

Other than that, citizens were left alone to do what they wanted. People still felt free in society, even though they did not trust the politicians, the corporations, or the so-called friendly associations attached to them. It was the way it was: all social media was monitored by a department in town called the Bureau. This was where Dexter worked. Everyone knew the data collated by the Bureau was accessible to all government agencies. What dominated the world was electronic tracking; if you knew that, and you were smart, then it was possible to escape agencies like the Bureau. You had to be very clever on how to hide not just your face, but your credit card details too.

The Orchard Hotel was always busy on a Thursday evening, mainly with students and business people. Just by looking around, you could see the weekend was once more approaching; people were beginning to relax. As usual, at the square bar, the two regular customers sat. The scruffy man looked unconcerned about life, its meaning, and how wonderful and awful it was. On the other hand, the man in the grey suit sitting beside him wore no expression at all. Visitors, or regulars, to the hotel could see that

they were strange bedfellows. Charlie was an out of work actor, a short career thus far. It was a career though that had taken him on a tour to many foreign countries. He may have been down on his luck at the moment, but he looked happy enough. Even though Dexter had a good job at the Bureau, and a large government pension to look forward to, you could not say that about him; he looked miserable.

After another drink of beer from the neck of the bottle, Dexter sniggered: "You think you will be able to handle the Wall of Fun, then, Charlie boy?"

Charlie of course knew all about the Wall of Fun from friends, as well as written reports on chat forums on the Internet. He knew the programme, the Wall of Fun, had been introduced to create more citizens. Politicians were crying out for a population increase. If the figures carried on the way they were going, in 20 years time, there would not be enough workers to service the state. Action was needed now. Therefore, a few years ago, radical plans had been drawn up, by elected members who sat in parliament, to alleviate the problem. This happened when they could no longer import foreign labour due to new legislation. In the computer age, very few people cared about politics. Most had given up on politicians, altogether. In fact, only 30 percent of the population voted at the last election.

In an official tone, as if he was in his office, Dexter asked him: "Can I read the e-mail they sent you?"

Charlie had not forgotten his acting skills. For a moment or two, he shuffled as if indifferent on his bar stool. After this, he replied: "Sure."

Presently, in a cool manner, he brought out his old-fashioned smartphone from an inside pocket of his tattered jacket, and placed it on the bar. Slowly, he put on his glasses, picked up the phone again, pressed the screen, smiled, then pointed at the text: "Invitation, to go to the Wall of Fun."

It was plain to see it was the standard B52 e-mail, as they called it, from the Bureau, telling the client to attend and not much more. When they first met at the library, Dexter mentioned

to Charlie that he had been in a band in his teens. This was interesting, for Charlie had been in one too. It was true when he had joined the civil service, he kept an eye out for artistic people, like Charlie, so that he could help them with their projects. They used to chat a lot about what was going on in the arts. Dexter, at one time, was an advocate of the free spirit. However, since his illness, something changed within him. He was no longer interested in interesting things. Last month, he told Charlie that he was now on high-strength pills for his complaint. He did not say much more than that, though.

Charlie right away noticed the change in him; he could see that he preferred to go towards nothing now. His job was everything to him; he was a Bureau man, through and through. If pushed, Dexter would have said that he was a realist; he knew that all he had to look forward to now was a big fat pension - if he lived long enough. His wife hardly spoke to him anymore. She thought he would be better off living on his own. He never told her much what the doctor said to him. Lovemaking was over between them. He kept his eye on apartment prices in Thailand. One time, he told Charlie, in an e-mail, that he fancied retiring there - on his own.

Due to his condition, Charlie did not act anymore. Unfortunately, he damaged his inner ear a few years ago. He now walked in a peculiar way. People thought he was drunk when they saw him coming towards them on the street. When Charlie realised his acting career was over, he naturally wondered what to do. This is when he started writing music, thereafter sharing his songs on the Internet. Due to the exclusive corporate control of the Internet though, his songs never reached the public via the web, or the radio. The problem was that Charlie for some odd reason still believed in the corporate nature of society. The big boys knew what they were doing. This is what drew him to Dexter, the Bureau man, and other friends who worked within the record industry. They seemed to protect him.

For some reason, Charlie saw himself at the centre of things when, if truth be told, he was a complete outsider. Charlie thought

that he was part of the corporate establishment, but he was not. The reason for this was due to his relationship with Silvio Barroni. He was an agent for one of the big record companies in London. Silvio knew how to handle artistic people; after all, he was from Naples. He fed Charlie with interesting words. This increased Charlie's ego, but not his bank balance, or popularity on the Internet.

Dexter at present worked for the Ministry of Arts section, inside the Bureau. He joined this section five years ago, after the strange disappearance of one of its employees, a young lady called Ms Adler. Just after he took up his position with the aforementioned department, Dexter got involved with a curious new government initiative called: Programme Eugenics. The man responsible for this, Mr Rainer, advised the department that the state needed to get people away from their own individual projects, and into government sponsored jobs. If the individual refused they were to be sent for and dealt with by the Bureau. Clients who had no partners, and had no hope of finding one, either through finance or social inhibitions, were to go to what has become known as the Wall of Fun. In short, they were to involve themselves in getting people to mate. It was well-known many young people had become detached from society; they were no longer interested in other humans for sex. They seemed content with virtual sex. This was a huge problem for the state. The country would be in a perilous position if the birth rate kept falling.

When Charlie realised that he was now dealing with the department his friend worked for, he became cocky, and quipped: "I might not go along, you know. It depends what type of mood I am in, on the day."

The last part of the sentence seemed to drag. Sensing this, Dexter slowly picked up his bottle of beer from the bar, and stared at it as if he was part of the quality control team at the brewery. After checking the percentage of alcohol on the label, he said slowly: "You know they will stop your benefit money."

Charlie was at the age now that he was on his own; he was a free spirit. However, he needed state benefits so that he could

continue to travel and stay independent. He loved going to Italy. He also had a friend in Croatia. Charlie kept in touch with her by e-mail. She had visited Glasgow a few years ago, and worked in a restaurant in the city centre. He was planning to meet her again. In fact, just recently he had sent her some money for her to come over. It was not possible though: a problem with her Visa stopped her from coming again to the UK. Well, that is what she wrote back saying to him in the e-mail.

Dexter asked him again: "What are you going to do, Charlie, if you have no money coming in?"

Right away, Charlie thought of Silvio; he would help him. Dexter knew Charlie was a fantasist. He lived in his own world for most of the time. Sometimes, he was a travelling actor, other times he was a high-flying artist, who helped his executive record company friend in London.

It was a well-known fact, Charlie had one obsession above all others: he liked dressing up as a woman. He collected women's clothes - even their underwear. This was no easy task: for he did not know that many women. The girl in Croatia would only now and again send him some garments. People who knew him called him: 'Double Panties Man.' Of course, they were tight on him, but something happened to him once he was all dressed up. It was strange how he connected with the unusual world of sexuality, wearing women's clothes. Like most people who had heard about his fixation, Dexter could not understand it. He hacked his e-mail regularly, so he was up-to-date with what Charlie was up to.

In his quest to wear women's clothes, Charlie upset many ladies, young and old. On many occasions, he had been reported to the authorities, who in turn reported him to the Bureau. His record on their computer system made interesting reading:

His modus operandi is simple to understand. He operates in cafe bars, and on the street; he is always friendly to women. He invites conversation, as soon as he comes across them. Then at some point in the conversation, he asks them: "Can I have a dress, you wore? Can I have a pair of your panties." He always makes the request in an innocent voice. Some women, of course, do not mind;

they think it funny. We have had many complaints. The majority are horrified. It appears Charlie has no preference for style or fashion. Please refer to CCTV footage, on the Art-track system, for more information.

Chapter 2

Charlie also dressed like a refugee. The other thing that stood out about him was that he had a bad skin condition. He smiled a lot though; this was unusual in the modern world. Due to the fact he looked happy, this helped him no end. Some women - young and not so young - who had been asked for their clothes, never forgot him. They even helped him. There was only one condition he applied: he accepted only clothes that had been worn. New clothes were of no use to him. He told all the ladies this before they agreed to part with their undergarments.

Dexter, as he sipped his beer, wondered if Charlie was wearing ladies' panties, underneath his casual chord trousers. He only dressed outwardly as a women in his flat. He knew from listening to him that sometimes he went through fallow periods, and had to go without wearing women's underwear for months on end. For some unknown reason, he became interested in this strange obsession too. Dexter soon found himself surfing the Internet. There he read reports about men who, like Charlie, were also fascinated by ladies' panties. Charlie was not alone; it was obvious that there were many who bought and sold them to satisfy their obsession. After visiting numerous sites, he could see that

men, all around the world and from every background, were active panty lovers.

In a serious tone, Dexter asked Charlie: "The woman you met last month, did anything come of it?" When Charlie did not say anything, Dexter quickly added: "Your mate, who has the hair salon, introduced you to her. You met a woman there; I believe she reported you to the Bureau."

Charlie sighed, as if to admit to what had happened that day: "You can't win them all, Dexter." In any case, he was never one to hide his obsession: "I guess she got annoyed with me."

Due to the fact that he was open about his passion, some people made fun of him. The fact that most people knew about his peculiar fascination did not seem to worry Charlie. He liked talking about it to them, and others.

Staring at Dexter, Charlie said: "After I got my haircut, I arranged to meet her for a coffee just around the corner from the salon. Right from the word go, we got on like a house on fire. She had just lost her husband. She was very motherly towards me."

Before leaving the office that day, Dexter read the report on the incident; for he had access to all his client's files on his computer at the Bureau.

"I have been going to the Bush Salon for quite a few years now; the owner is a friend of my daughter. It is a good salon. The owner has some strange friends, though. They come in for a haircut when they feel like it. On Wednesday of last week, a young man came in. He walked, as if someone was pushing him. It soon became obvious he had a problem with his balance. I was surprised to find out that he was not drunk, or on dope. He was not a down-and-out either, although he looked not far from it. Having said that, he had an honest look. This is what it must have been that endeared him to me. The owner of the salon said he had been an actor once, but now had problems with his health. When he heard that I had been to the city of Dubrovnik, the young man became very friendly towards me. Soon we were next to each other in front of the mirrors; I was waiting for my hair to dry, and he was waiting to get his cut. He asked me if we could meet for a coffee; I could hardly hear what he was saying to me, with all the noise of the salon. I felt sorry for him. I said

yes. Apparently, he was just about to go to Croatia on a trip to see his girlfriend there. 'No time like the present,' he said, so we arranged to meet around the corner in a place called Agent Provocateur, at three o'clock that afternoon for a coffee, so that I could update him on the city. I was not long back from my holiday there, so the adventure was still fresh in my mind. The owner as I left his salon made great fun of this. However, he did assure me that he was harmless - that was obviously a joke.

As soon as I met him there, inside the cafe bar, Charlie told me that he had a problem with his balance, due to damage done to his inner ear. Having said that, he could hear me all right. He said he did not drink alcohol, or take drugs. And to prove it, he held up the soft drink he bought for himself, before I came in. He wasted no time in telling me all about his girlfriend whom he had met here in Glasgow, when she came to visit the city, two years ago.

Apparently, she has problems too. She could not get a Visa to come over to see him, so that is why he was going to see her. It was after this long, somewhat sympathetic story that he paused, and looked across the table at me. I noticed his bad skin condition, which I could see he was conscious of. It was this that I thought he was going to mention, for he suddenly became silent. I could not believe my ears. He looked straight at me, and this time with a lovely smile he asked me in a very kind voice: "Would you like to give me a dress you have wore, or a pair of your panties?"

Well, I thought someone at that moment had just spun me around, and placed me in a foreign land. Apparently, I let out a scream. I can't remember if I said anything. All I know was that I went for his neck. He had no problem exiting the cafe bar, laughing, I may add, as if it was all a joke.

Can I ask the Bureau to interview this young man? I have supplied his details at the bottom of the e-mail: for background reports. I hope you solve his obsession that he has with women's undergarments. I believe many women - just like me - will be taken in by his strange behaviour.

Florence Robbins.

On the whole, Charlie was not very successful. For example, out of the last hundred women he asked, only five had given him what he wanted. He was optimistic though about the future. And as they came out of the hotel bar where they had enjoyed a drink,

Charlie told Dexter: "Yesterday, I met a middle-aged woman who is studying at university. I think she is into law or religion, something like that. Anyway, I met her on the train. She was a nice person. I was lucky: for the only spare seat was the one next to hers. Later on that day, I met her again in my favourite coffee bar in town. What a coincidence! It was very quiet in the restaurant. She had booked a table, and was waiting for her friend to arrive. When I saw her sitting at the bar all alone, I went over and said hello. She even bought me an espresso coffee."

"Normally, when I ask for someone's clothes, I am slightly on edge, but she was so nice I felt quite relaxed when I asked her. I even told her all about my obsession. She seemed to understand my fixation, and after she had finished her drink, she stood up, took off her pale blue panties, and gave them to me. I was over the moon. No one in the restaurant noticed her doing this - it was incredible. Some women send them to me in the post, but this is the first time a woman has done this in public. The woman was very kind. She handed them to me with a smile. Normally, I head off pretty quickly with the prize, but I felt this time so humbled by what she had done that I sat for a minute or two, and talked to her. She told me that she was hoping to work for a charity when she left university."

Dexter had little or no sense of humour; he put this down to the nature of work he was involved with at the Bureau. Constantly monitoring people had made him unreal, just like the figures he watched on his computer screen every day. It had not always been like that though. When Dexter was a teenager, he had been outgoing; he even went on demos. Dexter used to laugh a lot when he was at college, not anymore. He could not remember the last time he told a joke to someone, never mind laugh when someone told him one. He had been at the Bureau for nearly two decades now, and was in line for promotion again. Every week, Monday to Friday, he worked hard from nine to five. At the beginning, Dexter could almost sleepwalk through the day - not anymore. Charlie of course could lie in bed all day, if he wanted to.

Inside the hotel, Dexter said goodbye to him. They promised they would go for a drink again, before the end of the month. In a dull sultry tone, the Bureau man said to the out of work actor: "Okay, Charlie boy, I will send you an e-mail."

"Charlie never usually went home after meeting anyone; he always hung around in a bar in town, just in case a friend came in. His well-known maxim was: "Life is all about wearing women's clothes."

Chapter 3

In an office not all that far away from where Dexter worked, inside the Bureau, Joan and John were busy checking the data from the webcams they sold. The company they worked for served the private sector, as well as the public. Their webcams went all around the world. The private sector was the area John managed; Joan dealt with the public. You could buy their cams in the department stores, but people mainly purchased their products over the Internet. Consumers bought them for different reasons. Some people used them to talk to others; many monitored their property with them.

The company they worked for was called: Vision Hide. Today they were all alone in the office; things were quiet. They knew their boss would no doubt be in sometime in the afternoon. It was a small staff, and everyone got on fairly well. However, even though co-workers knew Joan and John lived together; they did not know much about them. They kept themselves to themselves. Their colleagues did not know they had a secret life. At night, Joan and John watched their clients over the Internet on their computers at home. Cam People, that's what they called themselves. During and after work, Joan and John looked out for vulnerable people they sold cams to.

Charlie, after much thought, bought a cam from them: for he was afraid that living alone he would be burgled. In fact, someone tried his door just last week. He knew there were people who went around his area knocking on doors and when no one answered, they forced the lock. Charlie heard this from the neighbours. He bought the product online, and after some teething problems, he got it up and running. Now, when outside, he loved to check his phone, and keep an eye on his apartment. Little did he know that he wasn't the only one.

Joan and John watched their clients on their phones too: for they had access to all usernames and passwords. Of course, they were not meant to do that. However, when they came across people who were in trouble, vulnerable, or lonely, they felt obliged to keep an eye on them. "After all, we are Cam People," is how John put it to Joan.

At home, Charlie liked to relax. He had learned over the years how to arrest the will. He did this by listening to music and smoking. He sometimes switched on the TV, but now that he was approaching fifty he, like most people of that age, had become bored with it. The golden era of TV was over - it was in the past. Today everything was Internet based. He bought a second-hand computer many years ago, and it still worked. Charlie had a thing about second-hand gear. Even though the computer that he had fixed the cam to was old, it worked pretty well. The signal only dropped now and again, and he had to reboot it.

Needless to say every day, he was on many sites looking for ladies' clothes. He very much enjoyed sitting in his underwear looking at the computer, and gazing out from his high rise flat down at the city below him. In the afternoon, he enjoyed going to the library; this is where he met the girl from Dubrovnik. He knew there was always someone there for a chat. He was up for sex anytime, but Charlie did not like the chase anymore. He thought things in life should just happen naturally. The meaning of life was simple: sex, smoke, and rock and roll. Many years ago, Charlie was told this by his peers, that this was the way to live life. He was still being true to the cause.

Joan was up early this morning; John was having an extra half-hour in bed. They did not start until ten o'clock today. After coffee and cereal, she switched on her computer. As usual, Joan read the free Guardian online newspaper, then after that she checked her e-mail. She could see there were five unread e-mails in the inbox: two refunds from Amazon, two blog updates, and one special offer from a train company: "Isn't life really exciting," she muttered to herself, as she deleted them.

After this, she opened up the app on her desktop, typed in her favourite client's username and password, then clicked on the app again. In a few seconds inside the small box on the top left hand corner of her computer Charlie appeared. He was up early too. She could see him sitting there in his underwear. There was nothing unusual about that. She smiled to herself, as she enlarged the picture; it soon became full size. Joan had a soft spot for Charlie. She could not really pin it down. Her two brothers were strangers now to her, maybe that was it.

She put the small earphone jack in the socket of the computer and listened in. The fact that he was rubbing his balls did not worry her at all; for she had seen this many times before. Charlie did not seem to understand that once his e-mail had been acquired by a stranger, all that was needed was his password, and they too could keep an eye on him, just like Joan was doing. This worried Joan: for in the modern computer world, she knew that many criminals were adept at this kind of thing. They worked for anyone who paid them.

Suddenly, Charlie picked up the phone beside him, and said in a friendly tone: "Hey Dexter, how is it going, chum?"

Joan had come across Dexter in Charlie's apartment before. There was something she did not like about him. She felt that Charlie did not realise that Dexter could stop his benefits anytime he wanted to. He was a Bureau man through and through. Charlie would soon find himself evicted from his high rise flat, if he was not careful. He would be out on the street before he knew it. The Bureau cared little about their clients, only their targets they had to meet every month. She knew this from experience: last month

her friend was evicted for not paying Council tax. This would happen to Charlie, unless he did everything they asked of him.

Joan would update John on the way into work. She knew they had to keep an eye on Charlie, as well as that old woman who lived alone. They were vulnerable; they had no relatives to care for them. In the case of the old woman, her son worked abroad. It was plain to see the Bureau had their eyes on them.

After John turned off the highway, they once more headed for the city centre. He could not see that Charlie was in any immediate danger. With a smile, he changed the subject: "What about the old woman with the tartan shawl? How's she getting on?"

One-time Joan, in the office, came across her by chance. She thought the account had lapsed, until she saw the woman sitting there in the dark. She immediately checked the details on the system. Apparently, she lived in the country, outside of the city. Her son worked abroad in Germany. The account was setup by a kind neighbour. However, he must have moved away from the area. No one regularly came to see her. No one except that is a worker from the Bureau, one of Dexter's colleagues. Every day the old woman was constantly hassled by an angry woman on the phone. Joan took this to be a relative. She never visited her though. She swore at her and abused her.

The old woman had a strange philosophy as how to deal with all of this. She sang songs to herself. Her favourite song was *Cruising Down the River*, by Russ Morgan. Spiritual visions appeared to her too, to help her. She would repeat sometimes out loud to herself: "I remember when I met Jesus at the shore. I knew it was him; for he had wonderful eyes. He was dressed in an old coat; I took him to the charity shop at the seaside, and bought him a new coat there."

Her husband, who had passed away, was now with Jesus in Heaven, and he was wonderfully happy.

Chapter 4

Mrs Mulberry was a member of the Worldwide Charity Foundation: WCF for short. She met Charlie in town a few weeks ago. Charlie went along to the seminar after seeing a colourful poster on the train station wall. It was an open invitation to all creative people: *Writers and Artists, please come along and meet people who are interested in sponsoring you.* At first, Charlie was suspicious, but after thinking about it, he said to himself: "Why not - nothing to lose."

Of course, he checked them out before going along. He made a phone call to the company, but it was right enough. "We want to meet people like you," the organiser told him.

Mrs Mulberry was just like everyone else, when it came to the arts. She liked them and whenever possible went along to exhibitions and seminars. If truth be told though, the middle-aged woman thought artists temperamental beings, and she generally avoided them. However, having said that when she saw an innocent man standing outside the local BSB Bank stall, at the trade fair, Mrs Mulberry stopped and spoke with him. Charlie she could see was wearing a BSB badge. It was natural for her to assume that he too banked with the same universal group as she did. When he mentioned to her that he knew the manager in the

main bank in town, she smiled at him. The conversation did not turn out the way she thought it would though. That evening when she got home, she drafted a letter to the Bureau:

Dear Sir,

I was attending the trade fair today on behalf of the WCF group. Can you please note it was late on in the afternoon when I met a songwriter called Charlie, outside the BSB Bank stall. He did not reveal his surname. He told me that he owned a record company, that he calls Scanty Records. On the face of it, I thought him a nice young man. I would say he is in his late forties. I did not doubt him when he told me that he helps children abroad by sponsoring them. He writes songs and uploads them to the Internet. As we stood there outside the BSB bank stall, he let me hear one of his songs, on his mobile phone. It was entitled Time for Love, or something like that. He does all the orchestration himself, writes the song, plays all the instruments, some virtual, some real, and he sings too.

I was starting to get interested in him, and his record company, thinking along the lines that our foundation could sponsor one of his songs, and use it on our website. He was very keen to show me his studio at home. It was when he was telling me that he had bought an old classic synthesiser, he stopped speaking and looked at me. There was an unusual silence, and I wondered what was wrong, and of course what he was going to say next. Then out of nowhere, he said the following: 'I hope you don't mind me asking you, but I have an obsession. Can I have a dress you wore, or a pair of your panties?'

Well, you could have knocked me down with a feather. I will admit that I have a quick temper, and I found myself belting him with my Bella designer handbag. I must say he took it rather well; he laughed as he escaped, and quickly made his way out of the trade fair. The man at the stall kindly came over and asked me if I wanted to call security, but I told him there was no need. However, I did promise him that I would write to you, and ask you to interview the man in question. Can you try to help him with his obsession? His details are on the website under his company name.

When Joan found out that Charlie was now blogging, she went to the site he had joined. He spoke about the website to the girl from Dubrovnik on the phone the other night. She remembered hearing him talk about it in glowing terms. Her trained eye looked down at the list of names above the blogs. There were various topics there. It seemed an open forum for anyone to come on and write what they were thinking: anything about the world, and what was going on today in society. It wasn't long until she found Charlie's offering: KafkaMan. When she read his blog, she immediately laughed at what he had written. *There should be a Shake Your Willy Day, once a year, and on that day, all men should exercise themselves.*

It was an odd feeling when the e-mail came through, telling Dexter that he had been promoted to Section Leader. He expected it of course, but the reality of taking the top job at the Bureau now somehow seemed unreal. He had to start work in his new position on Monday, at the beginning of the new month.

Strangely enough he thought about Charlie. Now that Dexter had been promoted, he knew he would not be able to meet him for a social drink in the evening. It would have to be in the afternoon, as with any client. Section Leaders were apart from the rabble. Even though he was an oddball, he would let on he knew Charlie, if anyone asked about him in the office, but distance himself from him. He was to start work right away on the appointed day at the appointed hour. There was quite a big increase in wages, he noticed after reading the e-mail. He had instructions as how to clear his desk, and process the names of people still to go to the Wall of Fun.

Dexter was not sure how he should approach Charlie, and tell him the news about his appointment. After some thought, he decided that he would call him up on his mobile, and let him know. He knew that up until the end of the month, they could still socialise and go to the hotel bar, where they usually met for a drink. Dexter knew how things worked at the Bureau. It was a matter of procedure, even though he was moving on, he would

have to get his client ready to go to the Wall of Fun. Once your name was on the list, it was hard to get it taken off. Charlie's last caseworker, Derrick Forbes, recommended he should go there. He noted this well over a year ago. This was after the second letter came in from a woman complaining about his antics. The case officer also observed that no longer could Charlie take care of himself at home. The house was always in a mess. He did not put the garbage, and renewable objects, out on time, or into the right coloured boxes. He also noted foreigners were staying with him at weekends, and drugs were being taken in his flat.

Dexter phoned Charlie's mobile again, but there was no answer. An hour later, he decided to leave the office and go round and see him. Dexter wanted to tell someone the news about his promotion. He was feeling good about it. He could send an e-mail, but it was not the same thing as telling someone in the flesh.

He arrived outside Charlie's flat at just after one o'clock. Dexter knew where Charlie stayed; it was not far from the city centre in a high-rise flat, down near the old River Clyde. He knew that if Charlie worked late into the night, on his projects as he called them, he did not usually get up before midday. At first, he could not hear the doorbell, so he pressed it again; he guessed that Charlie had switched it off before going to bed last night.

Dexter knew Charlie had stayed here since his mother, and father had passed away. The loss of his parents a few years ago had caused him to retreat from the area where he was brought up, to one in the city centre. It was true: time had changed both men. Due to his promotion, his client was like a stranger to him now. He was becoming weird. Charlie often spoke to him now about life in music production terms: how everything that moved caused a vibration.

Even though Dexter knew that the death of a loved one must have caused a heartfelt vibration in his soul, he had little or no sympathy for him. He knew that the loss of both parents, within a year of each other, had affected Charlie. He could see that the only thing that seemed to soothe Charlie was pop music. Charlie believed that he as an artist was key to its continual success, even

though no one had ever heard of him. Dexter no longer thought him funny; he was becoming a nuisance.

He still wanted to tell this pain in the neck though about his promotion. Dexter knocked twice, two loud chaps, and waited outside the door. Just when he thought about going, he heard some movement behind the blue door. Suddenly, it opened and Charlie's tired face appeared, along with his sleeve and a leg of his striped pyjamas. The latter filled in the missing details as to where he had been, while Dexter was looking for him.

After rubbing his eyes, Charlie said: "Oh, it's you, Dexter, come in." He seemed to wake up after this, and his tone changed: "What are you doing calling on me at this time of the day?"

Dexter walked inside, turned and closed the door, "I have some good news for you?"

"What time is it?"

"Sorry for getting you up, Charlie boy. I just popped round to tell you that I have been promoted to the head of the section at the Bureau and, as from next month, you will not be my client, anymore."

Charlie looked back at him and smiled. With a good-hearted laugh, he said: "More nights out, then, Dexter boy."

Dexter, as he made his way into the untidy small hallway, coughed. He casually looked around, before adding: "I am afraid, quite the opposite."

"If you want some coffee, Dexter, you know where the kettle is?"

Charlie disappeared, so Dexter went through to the kitchen, and made himself a coffee. He had done this many times before. He knew where everything was. Nothing ever changed in his flat. Presently, Dexter took a cup out of the dirty sink, cleaned it, lifted a spoon and filled it with coffee. Then he went to the fridge to find some milk. It was like living in another world; everything, everywhere, was dirty.

Although, the flat was housed inside a modern tower block, as he looked out of the window, Dexter felt he was in an old-fashioned high rise scheme. This was probably because people

similar to Charlie, he had met through the Bureau, came from deprived areas. In fact, when he thought about it, most of his clients stayed in those old skyscrapers. Charlie, like many men who lived alone, had no time to clean up, or keep the place tidy. There were ashtrays everywhere, full of crushed cigarette ends, lots of old synthesisers, drum machines, cheap electric guitars, and percussion instruments, lying all over the place. He had never been in his bedroom. He thought that even though next month things would change, he should keep his distance.

Charlie a few moments later came through from his bedroom. He was no longer wearing his blue and white stripe pyjamas. He wore only a vest and boxer shorts. The vest had a large green map of Italy on it. It looked cheap; the colour had faded. As he came into the living room, Charlie surprised Dexter, he said in a bright tone: "You like the shorts?" and pulled them out from his waist, as if they were tight on him. Then his face came alive, he bent his legs and laughed: "You know, you have got to shake your willy first thing in the morning."

Charlie was in such a good mood now that he did what he always did in the morning; he ran his thumbs around his boxer shorts, making half circles, joining from the middle of his waist. Then he pulled them down, and duly slapped his willy, first onto the right thigh, and then onto the left thigh. After doing this, he pulled up his boxer shorts, and danced around the room, as if the floorboards were on fire. He finally stopped by his favourite chair, turned round to face Dexter, and smiled at him, before flopping down.

Anyone else would have laughed and thought it funny. Dexter was not like that; he hid his emotions, like royalty he never showed them off in public. In any case, he did not know what to say or do. He knew this was when Charlie was on stage. When his imaginary world came to life again; he even looked a different person. Dexter had witnessed it before, many times. In his heart, Dexter hated Charlie. How could someone be so happy, when they had nothing?

Chapter 5

In the city centre, inside the webcam office, Joan was laughing to herself. She did not like Dexter, but she loved it when Charlie acted up. He did it all the time, when there was someone in the flat, or not. The way he did it was just like a boy; she knew Charlie loved an audience. Most people she guessed would laugh at him when he did stupid things like that. Right on cue Charlie farted, then said: "Thank you."

No one else in the world she knew acted like this; it was so funny. Dexter of course did not find it funny at all. He said nothing at first. Moments later, he got his own back by saying: "Due to the fact that I have been promoted, I have to pass your file to another colleague. So from next month, Charlie, you will not be one of my clients."

Charlie looked up from fastening his trousers. He made a face at him, as if inhabiting one of his favourite fictional characters. Then he said in a rogue movie actor's voice: "You know, Dexter, you are a very interesting man."

It took a few moments for it to sink in; things would be different for him, as from next month. However, ever the optimist, as Charlie walked over towards the open planned kitchen in his flat, he smiled at the laptop camera, sitting nearby. It was as if he

knew someone was watching him. Still in character, he proposed to his friend at the Bureau: "I know you are very talented man, Dexter, why not become my agent, and get me a record deal?"

The Bureau man stood in the middle of the living room. He did not react. Presently, Dexter said to him in his usual mundane way: "Charlie, up until the end of the month, let's meet in a coffee shop in town, every Wednesday, say around two o'clock. I can help you prepare, and get ready, for the Wall of Fun."

Charlie just smiled at Dexter, as if what he had said to him was genuine: "What do you think of my new casual trousers and colourful checked shirt?" he asked patting his thighs.

Dexter had enough of this. He knew he would have to put his foot down: "Charlie, you will need to agree to go to the Wall of Fun, or you will lose all your benefits."

This seemed to sober Charlie up: "Yea, I know what you mean, Dexter," he said, as he sat down on the old sofa to tie his shoe laces.

The living room had no particular style or theme to it; it was just a mess. However, Dexter could never understand why there was always a friendly feeling there inside it. If truth be told, he could not understand Charlie at all. The Bureau man did not like to give away his thoughts. Just then, he stopped looking around him in case he let something slip. A few moments later, Dexter thought he had better say something: "I won't be able to meet you at weekends."

This time he did not add that the Bureau did not allow managers and clients to socialise together. He took it for granted that Charlie would know this. The book on the coffee table in his flat had an interesting title: *The Mirror of Fame*. Dexter picked it up. He opened it and read the inscription on the dedication page. *To the Pantaloni Champions.*

Charlie was forever telling his friends about his adventures abroad. Everyone knew he loved travelling throughout Europe, meeting people, seeing new places. He noticed Dexter reading the coffee table book. In a luxurious tone, Charlie said to him: "One time, you know, I went to Italy, and there inside the walled city of

Lucca, outside a cafe bar, opposite the statue of Puccini, I spoke to an Australian woman. I spotted her sitting there smoking, having a coffee. I made up an excuse, left my Italian chum, and went inside and bought myself an espresso coffee. I liked the look of her. When I came outside, I noticed there were only two tables, so I could not help but speak to her. The woman told me that she was on her own, travelling throughout Europe. She was a writer. You know me; I can spot a lonely soul a good distance off. She could see that I was in the same boat as she was: no close relatives, no work mates, travelling on my own. It was only a matter of time before I asked her the million-dollar question."

Casually, leafing the book Dexter had picked up from the coffee table, he said sarcastically: "I wonder what that was?"

"You know, travelling from city to city around the world is easier for us men. We do not have to explain ourselves, but middle-aged women are different. They are vulnerable. They are always hit upon, asked where they are going. Who are you with?"

"You are some banana, Charlie boy," Dexter said, putting down the book again on the coffee table.

Joan in the office in the middle of town, looked at her terminal to see if there were any incoming e-mails. She picked up her plastic coffee carton that John kindly bought for her from the local cafe next to their office. He left it by her computer, before heading out of the office again. John knew she liked the new Chai Latte coffee. In a familiar way as she opened the white carton, she blew into it to cool it down. Joan had not heard the story before, about the woman in Italy, so she listened in carefully. A few moments later, as if John was still beside her, she said to herself: "That man does not care about Charlie, even when he is telling him all about his life."

"It was her that Christened me the Pantaloni Championi," said Charlie with a smile, before lighting another cigarette. "In fact, after doing so, she went into her purple trolley case, and brought out a pair of lace black panties, and handed them to me - my favourite type. Her book was not out then, but last week she sent me a copy of it in the post, along with another pair of her

panties. I will need to give her an e-mail, and thank her, see how she is doing. I wonder if she is going back to Italy this year?"

Joan smiled to herself. She liked the story. The Australian woman must have known that Charlie was really a nice young man, and that was why she did what she did. As she drank her Chai coffee, Joan thought about doing the same thing, sending Charlie a pair of her panties. "Maybe, next week, pop another pair in the post to him, keep him going. We will see."

Apparently, when a friend back home read what the woman had written, he translated it, and from then on everyone started calling Charlie: 'Double Panties Man.' This stuck, and soon everyone started calling him this. Of course, his Italian friends when they heard about it naturally still called him the Pantaloni Championi.

Dexter knew Charlie had a meeting at the end of the month with his new case officer; he had to get him ready for the Wall of Fun. Charlie's business card was interesting. He saw it lying there on the mantelpiece: *Travelling Actor*. Dexter reckoned he would be off soon on his travels again. He was right. His Internet train receipt came in the post that very morning. That was why he was in such a good mood. Dexter knew he loved trains, and would pay double the price to stay near to the ground. Charlie loved to travel from station to station throughout Europe. His last trip sounded interesting.

"It was a short trip to Italy to stay with a chum in Milan," is how he put it in an email to Dexter.

He enjoyed himself immensely there, and no wonder. Charlie, the Travelling Actor, met a group of Swiss women on the train. They were all heading for Paris. He managed to get all five of them to give him their panties. This was his greatest success to date. He returned home last Sunday, happy as any man could be.

Dexter noticed the cartons of duty-free cigarettes lying on the old-fashioned coffee table. Everyone knew Charlie loved smoking; you only had to smell him to know this. He told everyone he did not drink anymore; this was not completely true. Charlie would not admit that he had got past the stage of pulling women. He

loved talking to them, there was no doubt about that. Charlie remembered the tender affections of his mother; men and women could see this in him, as soon as they met him. He was tender yet aloof. This was a strange combination for people to deal with.

Joan wondered about the new case officer. If it was a woman, would she help him? She knew a woman who once worked for the Bureau. Charlie was such a nice boy, maybe his new case officer would fall in love with him and save him from going to the Wall of Fun. She knew the Bureau had tried all sorts of campaigns, before bringing in the Wall of Fun: free sex movies, party nights out, tax benefits for couples with children. However, the population did not increase. The papers said there was no plan B. The Wall of Fun had to work or the country would be in trouble.

Even on the web cam, Joan could see that when Dexter was there, Charlie would drift away into his own world. She was always amazed at the things he said, when he came back into the real world around him. She could see that wherever he went, it seemed to rejuvenate him. Dexter she did not like one bit. She felt that there was something odd about him, though she could not put her finger on it.

The following month they met in the afternoon, inside a cafe bar in town. It all seemed different somehow, than before, not so friendly. Charlie sensed this and he looked at the menu as if to get his bearings. When he spotted a very sexy young lady standing by the counter, looking for a seat, he stared at her: "Nice pussy," he cracked, and smiled at Dexter.

The girl was not wearing any stockings. Dexter could see that. Was Charlie wondering what she was wearing under her tartan short skirt? Charlie he knew had developed a language all of his own when meeting strangers. He was cautious, gentle and kind. However, like most men, before he met females, he was macho. Everyone knew he was a fantasist. Charlie loved the unreal world where everything was possible. He knew that every day he could meet strangers. This was not of course attainable for Dexter, in the world he lived in. Charlie only wanted their panties or dresses, that was fair enough - was it not. Dexter knew that this kind of

behaviour was frowned upon at the Bureau. They were told to target freaks and deviants. He had kept Charlie out of trouble, but he could no longer do that; for he was not his case officer anymore. It would be too risky to get involved.

Dexter looked at the young lady again: "You know her?"

Charlie beamed a smile: "No, but I like her."

Charlie, he knew would go on like this until it was time to leave, so to distract him, Dexter opened up his tablet device and checked his e-mail.

Dexter was happy with his promotion. He had resigned himself to the fact that there was no way for Charlie to avoid going along to the Wall of Fun. He knew that once the process started, he could not help him in anyway. The men and women, who worked at the Bureau were merciless, if their clients did not cooperate, they stopped all their benefits. This made sure that he or she was thrown out onto the street, and they would perish, or simply disappear, soon after.

Charlie loved to arrest the spirit, wherever he was. This usually unsettled the person he was with. He would suddenly break off from talking, light a cigarette, sit back and drift away. Of course, he could not do this inside the cafe bar. He also knew this was the first non-official appointment with the man from the Bureau, so to speak. Dexter reckoned he would have to slowly introduce Charlie into the idea of going along to the Wall of Fun.

When Joan came back from the toilet, she switched on the cam app on her phone to see how Charlie was getting on. He was not at home. She tried the cafe bar in town. John hacked their system on her request when they found out where they were meeting. Joan saw them standing together in the queue. She had to switch off her mobile though: for an e-mail request popped up on her computer screen. It was on behalf of that elderly woman. Someone was worried about her again. Joan remembered that a kind neighbour set up four cams in her house a while ago.

The heading on the e-mail confirmed that the elderly woman had got a message in the post about her cam. Apparently, someone reported that the wifi signal kept dropping. It said that when this

happened, it was not possible to monitor her until the cam company reconfigured the cams. She was a lovely old woman. Joan knew this: for she sat for most of the day alone, with a tartan shawl around her, talking to herself. But who was the e-mail from?

During the day the old woman in her apartment usually sat at the window, sometimes on the couch. At night, if she was sitting by the fireplace, near the phone, Joan got a good look at her. Close up the old woman looked like a child who had outgrown her body. It was a lonely life for her now. Only a young man called to see her. She took this to be her son, who worked abroad. He would sit next to her and hug her. Joan knew that although it was a solitary life, it was a better life than living in a care home, where the foreign workers and young temps cared little for the elderly. She had a caller who harangued the old woman from time to time on the landline phone. She would say the strangest things to her; hate messages were commonplace. It was bizarre. The images brought tears to Joan's eyes. Feeling sad, she checked out the cafe bar again to see what Charlie was up to. She knew their surveillance system had audio built into it.

Dexter knew that Charlie loved people, but they were suspicious of him. This of course was due to his appearance. Charlie had a tender heart, but this sometimes led him into the arms of people who operated scams. Dexter had heard he had recently lost money. He was interested in the girl from Dubrovnik. What was she trying to get out of him? As soon as he heard that she could not book a flight, he enquired about her. After he handed Charlie his coffee, he opened up the topic: "She is not coming over, now?"

"No, Visa problems - you know how it is, Dexter."

As if understanding, Dexter nodded, then they made their way from the counter to the table, and sat down. The Bureau man tried to give the impression, that he wanted to forget all about work, and all the mundane things that went with it.

Charlie, crossed his legs, looked at Dexter, then said in a natural tone: "I sent her some money, but she e-mailed me yesterday and said that she could not get a refund on the tickets."

The child he was sponsoring in Africa, that was interesting too. Of course, Dexter could not interfere with what he did with his money. He often wondered where he got it from. Charlie was on the minimum state allowance, but he travelled abroad quite a lot. At home, he bought musical equipment from bucket shops, just about every other week. Who was financing him?

Chapter 6

Dexter met Charlie the next day, after he got back from a short trip to Edinburgh. He chose as the venue a new cafe bar, just opened on St Vincent Street. It was Italian. Dexter knew Charlie loved Italy. He wanted to ease him into the 'New Deal,' as he called it, with his new case officer.

His new case officer was Scarlet Velstrom. She was a redheaded workaholic from Sweden. Scarlet hated men. She hated anyone who got in her way. Her appearance did not reflect what she was all about. She appeared mild mannered when, in fact, she was a scheming manipulative materialist. Like all materialists, she hated religion, the arts, and all other aesthetic pursuits. The word around the Bureau was that she no longer enjoyed the company of men or women for sex. What was said about her was true; her happy and carefree days were behind her.

Everything for Scarlet changed after she was sent to the Wall of Fun. It was there she found out she could not have children. Something did happen though. She met Dexter, and got a job with the Bureau. From a young age, Scarlet always had the knack of knowing who was who in the great scheme of things. This went back to her schooldays. She now lived alone in a luxury

apartment, strangely enough not all that far away from where Charlie lived, though the two had never met.

Dexter said, as he handed Charlie his espresso coffee: "Well, next month you will be with Ms Velstrom."

Charlie smiled and said in his comic actor's voice: "Is Scarlet blonde?"

Scarlet gave the impression that she was part of the new wave inside the Bureau. However, nothing much changed in the time she had been there, as far as all the other executives could see. Dexter was not worried about her. He was a man with his finger on the pulse. He was up-to-date on all the procedures and policies coming out of the Bureau. He knew the Bureau was run by the state, although it gave the impression to the outside world that it was a private company.

Dexter tried to be kind: "Charlie, I can't stop the order for you to be sent to the Wall of Fun. You are in Ms Velstrom's hands now."

Charlie rubbed his eyes. He did not believe that it would ever happen to him. After a few minutes, he excused himself, and said to Dexter: "I'm going outside for a smoke - back in a minute, chum," and he left the cafe bar."

As Charlie got up off his chair, Dexter nodded. He knew Charlie loved puffing; it was part of the artist's persona. The executive had studied the book: *The World as Will and Representation*, by Arthur Schopenhauer. He knew life was intense for the artist. The artist had to escape it, whenever he could. He had to relax. The artist had to break free from the ferocious will of himself, and others. He could see that Charlie was very good at this.

The artist was older than the executive. Dexter had learnt a lot from Charlie; though he would not admit it. To this day, the other executives could not understand him when he talked about Charlie. Dexter suffered from anxiety too. He could not see it coming, then suddenly it was on him. His doctor gave him pills for it, but they did not help him. He told the doctor that when he was under pressure, he suffered from migraines. And when he was uptight, his vision would sometimes go. It would start with a

sparkle in his eye, then it would slowly manifest itself into what computer language terms: a light tunnel effect. He put it down to too much caffeine. He stopped taking two caffeine shots with his coffee every morning. It was when he was in this state, Dexter thought about Charlie. His client he knew had been through the mill. He had suffered in life. He had no real job or income. Dexter could see that although Charlie had lots of problems, he was always happy. Dexter's best friend - if he had one - could not say that about him.

Last week, Dexter requested his medical records to see if he could find out more about Charlie, and what he was suffering from. He read with interest the report. Charlie's inner ear had apparently been damaged by listening to loud rock music, and this was why he sailed about the place like a plane coming into land. The report came to the conclusion: *'People due to his appearance and strange manner, think him odd, and avoid him.'*

When he came back inside from having his cigarette, Charlie asked in a chirpy tone: "What's the Wall of Fun all about, then Dexter boy?"

The cunning executive sat back, and slowly pushed the pamphlet forward for his client to read. In a friendly voice, he told him: "Anyone over the age of thirty, who has not procreated, can lose all their state benefits, if they do not agree to go to the Wall of Fun."

Charlie nearly laughed out loud, when he saw how placid Dexter's face looked. He had never seen him like this before. Dexter did not like being made a fool of, but he kept quiet. He knew the brochure he had brought along would give his client the low-down:

In the morning, you are invited to a party, where drinks and food are served. There you are asked to write down what attracts you to the opposite sex. This is fed into the computer. At midday, you go for a shower. You are then led into a room, and given a dressing gown to put on. Presently, you take it off, and stand naked in front of the Wall of Fun. We have the latest wearable tech headgear for you to wear. On the other side of the wall, there is a woman. She has been

chosen by the computer from the morning seminar, and she too is naked wearing the same headgear. Beautiful sexual images appear; they are handpicked. The computer is given access to your computer history. It knows what films you like. By the wonders of technology, when you are ready, the screen opens up, and you are sprayed with warm mineral water. As you enter the Wall of Fun, you are messaged. The same thing happens to the woman, on the other side of the wall. When you ejaculate she is impregnated with your sperm. The computer controls everything that happens between the male and the female. This procedure continues until she becomes pregnant; it may take months. You may have to come back several times to the Wall of Fun, before the course ends.

Even though in his heart, he was deeply troubled, the actor in him responded like a boy. As if he was hearing that he was going to a party, Charlie cried out: "Sounds great!"

Watching him on the computer, Joan knew Charlie was bluffing. He did not want to go to the Wall of Fun. Charlie was shy, sensitive. Many times she had watched him masturbate; he loved watching sex films on his computer. Every night, she had a front view seat. She could not see what adult sites he liked to watch, but whatever it was he really enjoyed it. He would slowly take off his clothes, and massage himself. Sometimes he would look into the computer and sigh; this made her empathise even more with him. She knew he needed to find someone to share his life with, but it was difficult for him. He was odd. Like most young people, Joan was against the Wall of Fun. She was against giving computers the right to take decisions on behalf of human beings - who their partners were - no matter what age, or social definition they were.

Joan knew that Charlie liked the idea of being part of the modern world. He hated any constraints placed upon him. He had an unusual outlook; he had sympathy with criminals, even those who had scammed him. She knew he never mixed with them though. He did, however, speak with petty thieves, and drug addicts, who hung around the library, and cafe bars he went to most days.

Charlie the artist fascinated the executive. Dexter wondered what type of drugs he took. He could not tell. His apartment was always a complete mess. When he was in his flat, his eye could not detect anything there of any real importance. He could not understand how he wrote music being so disorganised. Charlie seemed to have had a happy upbringing, and now with both parents gone, he lived alone, in a fantasy world. He knew that Charlie had had a shock, but what kind of shock, and when it happened, he could not tell. Charlie overlapped two worlds: the past and the present. The way he did it was very interesting indeed to Dexter. The present was the past and the future. That's why even when things were new to Charlie, he seemed to understand them.

"Charlie, you cannot get out of it; they will stop your money. You will have to go to the Wall of Fun," he said, and produced the form for him to sign. After a pregnant pause, Dexter added politely: "A reminder will be sent to you by e-mail this week, telling you the time, date and place.

No video existed on the Internet about the Wall of Fun; for it was difficult to get a camera into the area that they had built. However, there were many written reports on the Internet about it. That evening Charlie read one by someone called Nobby:

'The Wall of Fun: The get-together is friendly enough; you mingle around for a time. There must have been around a hundred people there, in the room, when I arrived. Half and half, I would say between the sexes. After a shower, you go along to a private room, where the Wall of Fun is housed. My first film was a sexy young couple. They were getting it on, when I faced the Wall of Fun. How they knew I had a thing for French women, I do not know. Anyway, you stand against the Wall of Fun, and by the time I had watched about seven short films, I was aroused. I was not conscious of the wall opening around my genitals; it was only when the warm mineral water came gushing out that I realised what was happening. I held off, as long as I could, but it really does feel like there is someone there with you, when you are up against the Wall of Fun.'

'They must have been happy as to what they got: for I never heard anything more from them again. I read on the Internet that all children from the Wall of Fun experiment, are brought up by the state. I should mention here that the money was paid at the end of the month into my bank account - quite a substantial amount.'

Chapter 7

The attachment to life was something natural, although Charlie did not like being too familiar with people, for the sake of it. He had learned over time that an emotional attachment had consequences. He liked being friendly, then moving on. He saw himself as a travelling actor, in a strange world full of contradictions. In fact, sometimes he saw himself as a great actor, living in a modern nightmare world. Charlie did not mind this. If he could put up with the death of his parents, then he could survive life as a journeyman actor in the post computer age. After all, he knew that all rich men were lonely, and that beautiful women never got what they wanted. When he got lonely, Charlie knew there was always someone to chat to on the street, at the library, or on his computer at home.

The next time Dexter met him was in the same cafe bar as before. This time, he had more forms with him for Charlie to sign. These forms were for his state benefits. They were to be increased after the tax year had ended. This was an unusual thing: for clients usually signed them when they went to the office to sign on. Dexter did not want to change his business relationship with Charlie. He was glad he was moving on though. After Charlie had signed the forms, Dexter thought he had better open up again the

topic about the Wall of Fun. "They have pencilled you in for the end of next month."

Charlie laughed: "That's fine," then he immediately asked: "Where is it, I have to go to again?"

"The Wall of Fun is held inside a private clinic in the city centre."

Charlie laughed: "It's only rock'n'roll, Dexter!"

To this happy retort, Dexter did not say anything: "This is the form you have to sign, and here is where it tells you what time you have got to be there at." Dexter turned the page and pointed at the relevant section. "You see from the picture, it is quite a nice place. The address is over here."

Charlie nodded, as he followed his finger to the company logo. Then he picked up his espresso coffee and said: "It looks like a spa." When the Bureau man said nothing, the artist smiled and added: "At the beginning of the year, you know, I visited a spa in Bangi di Lucca, Italy. I was on a prearranged holiday to Pisa to visit a chum there."

It was true Charlie visited the famous Spa there last year. He knew many famous artists: Byron, Napoleon, and Puccini, before him took the cure at Bangi di Lucca. He decided to visit the place after reading about it in a book at the library. He really enjoyed the experience. However, Charlie did not pay the fee at the Spa for the healthy thermal waters. Instead, after looking around, he went down the hill, and sat under the tap by the roadside, that he knew outputted the same volcanic mineral water. People of course laughed at him, as he waved to them as they went by in their cars. Sometimes, he would shout to them in Italian: "*Salute a tutti!*"

Dexter could see he was dreaming, so he turned the brochure around, so that Charlie could get a better look at the picture.

"Looks impressive," said Charlie, still thinking about himself sitting under the hot spring water in Bangi de Lucca. "You know, they drink the hot water there."

"Where?"

"In Bangi de Lucca."

"Why do they do that?"

"Ha fegato!"

Dexter did not understand Italian, and the conversation ran dry. There was a sense of time passing, something ending, something beginning, people moving on. There was a feeling of change in the air. Charlie signed the forms, but he did not stay too long. His relationship with Dexter he knew had changed, due to the fact that he was now in command of a whole section at the Bureau. It was impossible for them to be close friends under the circumstances.

Later that day in his messy flat, Charlie reconciled himself to his fate. He settled down in his favourite chair by the fireplace. He would not miss Dexter. Loneliness was a state of mind; he accepted things like that. Charlie avoided getting involved in worldly affairs, counterfeit relationships. When directives came along, like the Wall of Fun, there was nothing else for it, you had to face up to it. He must get through the day and enjoy it.

Every day Charlie dreamed of trains and train stations throughout Europe; this helped him no end. His travelling dreams he knew would go on forever. Travel set him free from the mundane world. In his mind, he could escape the Bureau, even if he could not escape the Wall of Fun.

One hour later, Joan watched Charlie walk around the living room in his flat. He was naked apart from wearing underwear. She wondered how the meeting went with Dexter that morning. She could not really tell by looking at Charlie on camera. Charlie sat on the sofa, clicked opened a folder on his desktop. He seemed happy. This folder she knew housed his video films from his Kodak camera; his last trip abroad. Joan wondered what he had filmed. She did not have long to wait. Due to the fact he sent a copy to the cloud she was able to access it. She was amazed to see on his computer a film of the last train journey across Europe. Now back home lying there on the couch in his flat in Glasgow, it was plain to see he imagined himself to be on that train again, travelling throughout Europe. She knew he took his laptop computer to the toilet with him. She wondered if he played videos there to remind himself of the toilet on the train. He was such a strange man.

With his feet up on the coffee table, and his head slightly tilted to the right, Charlie stared into the computer. It was as if he was looking out of the train window. She wondered when he closed his eyes was he pretending to be asleep on a night-train, travelling from Paris to Milan, whizzing past unknown fields and houses. She knew train travel thrilled him. Joan could see that making a journey anywhere, anytime, took him away from the nightmare world around him. Charlie was a born traveller. He loved to travel.

Joan laughed out loud when he farted again, and said thank you. This is what she loved about Charlie. He was eccentric, unpredictable, unconventional, and unbelievably funny. Unfortunately, she had to switch off her mobile phone: for one of her colleagues in her office looked over at her, and wondered what she was laughing at.

Charlie was not that up-to-date with modern technology; he did not create music on the go, like other modern musicians. However, when he was all alone in his flat, out would come his Yamaha synth. He would mess about and record songs until the early hours of the morning. He told everyone that he was carrying on the tradition of pop culture into the future. He believed that his music was an extension to what pop artists had recorded many years ago. Unfortunately, most people had moved on; they were no longer interested in the charts, or even what was on the radio. Pop music, or moreover modern music, for the new generation was just background music. Some of course enjoyed it, but it never led them to think they were part of a cultural movement, the way it did for Charlie. Even though he was a complete outsider, he believed he was part of the never-ending pop generation, and the never-ending culture of youth domination that promoted itself every night still on television.

The thing that Charlie had learnt over the years was that what people thought about him, did not rebound on him anymore. Secret conversations where his name was mentioned, made fun of, where he was defamed, made a fool of, did not affect him any longer. He knew it went on, but he had learned to smile and

ignore it. When he came across people who had spoken about him - not in a kind way - he sensed it in them. He knew they laughed at him, but he no longer cared. Charlie knew he was not your normal modern man.

He may be lonely and isolated, but he was happy within himself. He took it people who tried to make fun of him, were not happy people. Freedom in life for Charlie lay for him in travel. Yes, something happened to him when the surroundings changed. When he was not on the go, he still knew how to escape the world. He would switch on his computer and imagine himself on a high-speed train bound for some European capital. Even though he could use a computer, Charlie did not like booking tickets online. He was old-fashioned that way. Charlie preferred to give his booking to an agent, or agency, and for them to do this for him. He did not mind the extra cost. He liked the idea of being looked after by others. Charlie had no family or relations, so he became friends with those who helped him on his journey. He called them chums.

The state, and how it tricks people into making them subordinate to its ways, was of little interest to Charlie. He liked historical figures, powerful tyrants; he liked to read about them at the library. Politicians were dull creatures; he never thought about them much. He never voted. He could not care who was in government. Life never preoccupied Charlie, the way it did others. He was someone who could escape life by not wanting what others had. He avoided religious people too; he thought them dangerous. The church may be wonderful, but he did not go. God to him was to be found in freedom like rock'n'roll, or a good film.

Dexter was encouraged by the fact that most people knew he had a wife. Many of his friends cohabited, but he did not like that idea. Marriage gave him an air of respectability. Little did he know that his wife was having an affair with a man named Bill Young. In a strange twist of fate, she worked in the same office block as John and Joan. Although they did not know each other. It all came about when Dexter picked her up one time, and John having seen his wife with another man on CCTV, put two and two together.

He knew Bill Young from a wine bar in town, not very well, though. Thereafter, he followed them on CCTV, and knew the hotel they visited in the city where they carried out their affair.

Now that Charlie thought about it, the Wall of Fun was starting to get to him. He knew he had to report to the clinic on Monday at 9 am. What should he do? Due to the state of affairs in the country, men and women who did not go along to the Wall of Fun, soon found themselves having to live without state benefits. Many perished, many went mad, many simply disappeared.

Even though Charlie was not political in any sense, he knew what was going on. Even though he paid little attention to what was in the press, he knew that his homeland of Scotland was in a bad way, due to many political factors. Charlie wanted to hide away from it all. Dexter was a republican; he enjoyed the controversy. Infighting was not just between socialists and conservatives. The Muslims and the Jews were now at each other's throats, as well as the unbelievers and the agnostics. The population was dwindling; hence the reason the devolved government had brought in the Wall of Fun.

Dexter was fed up with Charlie; he disliked the artist now. He looked at the desk in front of him; it was a mess. He liked to have it clear and tidy. His wife asked him to put a picture of their son Bruce on it, so he did. He could not understand why he had not thought about doing that before. He was not in a happy marriage. Dexter could not for the life of him understand why he got married in the first place. However, he did like the title and the tradition of marriage, even though he did not like his wife now. Annabel had once worked at the Bureau as a temp. Her uncle had got her the job there. She had just turned fifty, and had not taken the change of life well at all. She was dumpy and lined. She liked dolls again and collected them. He thought she was as sexy as a sack of potatoes, as the saying goes.

When the initial excitement of being promoted faded, Dexter became morose. It was as if he had just woken up from a dream, and everything around him had suddenly changed back to what it was before. Everyone else seemed happy, but not him. Why was he

so unhappy? He often thought about Charlie; he had nothing except crazy dreams about being a great songwriter. Why was he so happy, when he had nothing? He did not understand it.

Dexter at one time wanted to be a diplomat. He believed it would happen, but now he knew it would not. You had to be well in with the political people at the Bureau to get posted abroad. He could not stand them. They were sex maniacs, drug-takers. Dexter hated the people he worked with. He was happy no one else was promoted. Charlie, his only friend, he could do without. He had entertained him, when he needed it. In any event, he knew that he would be no use to him now. Dexter felt Charlie would avoid the Wall of Fun. He would no doubt be evicted and consigned to a care home, looked after by Polish and Romanian workers. He would probably die there. This is what usually happened to his clients who disobeyed the Bureau.

Dexter never went to his old haunts anymore, where he used to drink with property agents and friends. He knew that some of them still met there in town. They were the ones, many years ago, who had started the fashion of running a business from a bar, or cafe in town. Some of them still operated from a mobile at the bar. They were not as friendly as they had once been. The last time he bumped into them in town, he thought they were hardened drinkers now. Like Dexter, they were rich, but lonely. Drink seemed to have made them unhappy in an unreal world. Sometimes Dexter fancied himself as a novelist. He used to like reading books. The only thing he read now was the Times online.

Dexter knew there was another way: Charlie could become a refugee. He would not tell him this though: for he was past caring about him. In any case, everything was posted on the Internet. If he was smart, he would find it. The new policy was in all the online newspapers: *'The government has new legislation in place for aliens to integrate into the community. If you are outside of the system, not a terrorist, then you can become stateless.'*

The executive got up from his desk, and walked over to the window. Dexter wondered what to do at lunchtime. He no longer met Charlie since his promotion. He would only meet him again if

he had to interview him. He knew he would miss all the funny emails, links, and comments he sent him. Dexter went back and shut his desk drawer, moved the landline phone near to the photo of his son, Bruce, switched the light off, then went out into the busy streets of Glasgow.

Chapter 8

Joan liked John the first time she saw him. It was in a nightclub in town. She was surprised when she met him again the following week. He was just as she remembered him. Most people she felt were different at night, and few could retain a natural presence during the day. She was even more surprised when he got a job beside her in town with the webcam company. After the strange coincidence, it seemed natural for them to fall in love. Like all lovers, they got to know each other pretty quickly.

It was a real surprise to Joan and John, when they discovered they shared a common belief in rescuing vulnerable people, from oppressive government workers - especially those attached to Dexter's section at the Bureau. In their youth, they were both persecuted by the Bureau. They saw their country differently now. It pretended to be democratic, when in reality the state controlled just about everything. The firm they worked for in the city developed software for cam applications; many government departments purchased them. They were an international corporate company. The team they were assigned to was responsible for assisting webcam users. All web technicians - that's what they were called - had access to the passwords, and e-mail addresses, of their clients.

Joan and John were fascinated by the way you could look into homes, even into the bedrooms of citizens, near and far. The strange case of the funny man in the untidy apartment started a few months after they got their apartment. John got an interesting e-mail at work from a client whose handle was travelman:

I am just a regular superstar, living in Glasgow. I have four cams monitoring my flat: three via USB, and one onboard the computer. Every day, I can check my apartment, on my phone, when I go out, or when I am abroad. However, now I have nine on screen, four working, five blank.

How do I fix this?

Charlie

Thereafter, Joan and John both advised him by e-mail. They liked Charlie right away; they promised to keep an eye on him. They knew they could do this in secret, using their phones during the day and at night. Today on cam, Joan could see Dexter was in his flat again; he was trying to bully Charlie into going to the Wall of Fun. As she switched up the volume control on her device, she heard him say: "Listen Charlie, just sign the forms - don't be an idiot!"

Joan enlarged the picture on her phone to see what was going on. She could see Charlie sitting in his favourite chair by the fireplace. He was looking tired and sad; he had no doubt been playing his keyboard late into the night.

Dexter shouted at him again: "If you don't sign the forms - you'll be annihilated!"

Charlie sitting there by the old-fashioned electric fire ignored him. He was looking through a *New Order* songbook. Joan could tell he was just about to light another filtered tip cigarette. At that moment, Charlie put down the book, and made a gesture with his hand to the world, as if nothing bothered him, then he lit his cigarette.

John who was standing beside Joan in the office moved away from her, and brought out his mobile phone. With one click he

switched it on. He said looking down at it: "Why does Charlie not go for electric-fags? The real ones cost a fortune, nowadays."

Joan sighed: "He likes the old ones. He buys them in bulk, duty-free, when he is abroad."

John took off his jacket, nodded, and empathised with the artist: "To avoid the high taxes, I suppose?"

"Yes."

As soon as he moved the cursor over Dexter's face his voice changed: "He is up to no good, you know, that Bureau man."

Joan agreed with him. She turned and asked him: "What should we do, John?"

John was forever thinking up ways to help the oppressed. Joan always wondered what he would come up with next. The office was quite quiet at the moment, that did not mean anything though. One thing they knew: there were cameras everywhere. There was always someone keeping an eye on them at work. However, using a mobile phone, and the latest technology, was still the best way to avoid the sensors. It was well known that you could buy cheap phones and discard them whenever you liked. It was also recommended to use a private network when keeping an eye out for others.

The cameras in the office sometimes checked the computer screens of the workers, and sent reports to the office manager, if anyone was breaking the rules. There were very few secret places now to hide in society. Data was collected about the individual on a daily basis, and sent to the Bureau. If you were acting suspiciously, they would pass it on to the Velvet Men at the Pentagon Centre. They were called this: for they were smooth operators. They say that one call from a Velvet Man was enough to see you expelled from state benefits.

They both knew Charlie, not just from watching him on the cam on his computer, but from the streets of Glasgow. Charlie went to the library in town every day. He loved speaking to people there, especially foreigners who were visiting the city. Sometimes he would bring them back to his flat.

Dexter suddenly stood in front of Charlie's computer. Joan and John could now only see the back of his jacket. Joan looked at John, and they both stared at each other. When they looked back at the screen to their horror, they watched Dexter put his left-hand inside his double vent, and from his back trouser pocket, he produced a small plastic container. When Charlie walked towards the window, to sort the curtain, they watched him pour whatever it was inside it, into his coffee cup.

It was John who came up with the name of Cam People. When he was under pressure, he usually cracked a joke. True to form he said in a natural voice: "What do Cam People do when someone is trying to poison someone else?"

Joan did not know, and shook her head. Presently, she read out what was written on his cup, the one he had left beside his computer: "Keep calm and carry on."

"Right," replied John, who suddenly had a brainwave: "Do you know Charlie's phone number?"

Joan immediately went into her contacts in her phone, but she did not have it there. She then searched on the computer for his details. She stopped searching though when Charlie came back into the room. Thankfully, he picked up his white cup, and went straight into the kitchen and emptied it into the sink. It was a lucky escape. He rarely finished his coffee. Joan knew his habits from watching him via the cam. She had become so taken by his lifestyle that she even knew when he would have sex. He always did it at the weekend. Charlie liked the Internet sex sites to stimulate him. She did not know though where he got the information from. She watched him every morning opening his mail at 11 am. He opened his letters with a bread knife. This was another thing that made her laugh. He looked like a tramp, yet acted like a king.

That night as soon as Joan and John were in bed, they cuddled up together. Making love on the floor of the living room was fun, but being in each other's arms before falling asleep was wonderful. As usual, before she fell asleep, Joan started a

conversation with her partner: "Charlie is such a nice guy, don't you think; I would like to know more about his past."

John listened for a while, then he turned away from her, and looked at the dark-blue painted wall. He was going to say something funny, like: 'His father was a famous actor in Hollywood, you know, and his mother was a ballet dancer in Russia,' but he never.

Joan put her arms around his stomach. When he did not say anything, she squeezed him.

"Come on, tell me what your thinking?"

John, in a tired voice told her what he had found out last week on the Internet: "Both parents are dead; his mother first, then his father. They left him a bit of money. This is what he uses for going abroad, and buying musical equipment. He has no brothers or sisters."

Joan, like John, knew this was the kind of person the Bureau liked to get their hands on. They liked the vulnerable, the displaced, the lonely. Local people *cliped* on them, so their files were always full."

"How are we going to help him?" Joan asked tenderly.

"Not sure," answered John honestly.

"If they don't get him to the Wall of Fun; they will push him into an early grave."

"Yes, I know. We will need to keep an eye on him, no matter what happens," said John, before adding, "I will think of something."

Joan unclasped her hands from around his stomach. She then turned and rolled away from him, as if wanting to get out of their king-sized bed. She was going nowhere though. She only wanted her iPad. She found it on the bedside table, switched it on, clicked the black cam app on the front page, and waited for the four squares to appear. Charlie's password was rockstar007. He never changed it. Even if he did, Joan knew she could find it on his computer.

She could not see into his bedroom although his computer was always on in the living room. She was not sure if he was in tonight. Was he alone? At night, he rarely switched off his light.

"Get back to sleep Joan. We are up early, tomorrow."

The next day at work, Joan replied to an e-mail from Mr Angry, as she called him. He was threatening legal action, unless he could get the cam app to work on his handheld device. She offered him a refund last week; he was still not happy. He was a difficult customer. She managed to alter the settings. Joan was pleased to tell him this, and that everything was working now. When she had finished with the call, Joan switched on her phone and clicked the cam app to see what Charlie was up to. She lifted up her small white earphones and listened in. Joan could see that he was on the phone. She was amazed; she had dropped one earphone in her cup of tea the other night, but both still worked. Charlie was in his dressing gown. She could hear that he was trying to sort out his tax return on the phone.

When he finished, he did what he always did, started speaking to himself. He laughed: "I am a man in search of my own underwear," there was a long pause, until a song came on the radio. Then a voice could be heard saying: "Where are my *Dick Winters* boxer shorts, I got for Christmas?"

Joan smiled to herself: "I wonder who that was from?"

The card she sent to him simply read: From an admirer. He knew it was a joke, but they were good quality; he liked wearing them. The problem was he could not find them this morning. At breakfast time, Charlie loved nothing better than to sit in his thermal fleece dressing gown, think and smoke. Joan wondered that if he could not find them, would he put on a pair of women's panties on this morning? And would they be hers? For she had sent him another pair, last week, when she realised things were running low. She never told John this though.

The lack of a family around him changed Charlie. The change was slow, almost undetectable. Since the passing of his parents, he saw the world as his family now, everyone was connected to everyone else, in some way or another. What lay

behind the facade did not really interest him. He knew there were problems. Charlie was keen on being friendly, even though he knew he would never be accepted into a real family again.

Joan sensed all of this. She wondered why he had no real friends; no one ever phoned him. Charlie went abroad to meet friends. She knew he hated Christmas, and that was why he went away in December, before the great event got underway.

Getting employment was difficult for middle-aged men. Young people too were put aside by society; this was the price paid for a healthy economy. Charlie understood that; for he was an artist. He knew the corporations could only employ so many people in the post computer age. Their shareholders demanded profits. Even though unemployment was high, it was not this that bothered young people, in the post computer age. It was the control the corporations influenced over them, even when they did not work for them. This annoyed many young people, and they gave up, feeling that they would never get in on the game. They were in the main non academics, and had no real interest in going to university or college. They were given one option: work for low pay, or not at all. It is up to you. You could see them every day in the city centre, emptying the cigarette butts out of bins at stations and cafe bars. They were called Shadow People, in the press.

Even when she went away for a break with her mother, Joan kept an eye on Charlie. She knew the Bureau was after him. She had seen this sort of thing before. Their job was to push the weak to the ground, at the same time as bringing fresh bodies in to replace them.

By watching him it was difficult to tell if Charlie understood the way civil servants operated: how they monitored his every move. Every month, a report was sent to the head of the Bureau about him. This contained graphs, recorded messages, even photographs. The pattern of a target's movements was comprehensive. They could even tell what their clients were up to when they were asleep: they hacked into their laptops and switched on their computer cameras.

The civil servants themselves were only carrying out instructions given to them by their political masters. They cared nothing about their clients. Every citizen should be monitored; that's what the Bureau were told by their masters. Of course, they could not all be looked at, at the one time. Unfortunately, Charlie was on their lists. Dexter, now that he was promoted would no longer protect him from the men in Velvet suits. Charlie he knew would have to go to the Wall of Fun.

Chapter 9

The following day Charlie went into town. The weather was depressing, but he was in good spirits: for he was off to see his agent to book his next trip abroad. He thought his travel agent as his personal manager - well the stars had one, so why not Charlie.

The young girl in the travel agent had seen him many times before, both in the travel centre, and on the street. You could not really miss Charlie.

"That man looks drunk or drugged," she overheard a woman in the office say to a staff member, as he floated in.

Mr Barr, his agent, who usually looked after him was not at his desk. The young assistant thought she had better go over and introduce herself to him, just in case Charlie had forgotten Mr Barr was off on sick leave. 'Get him seated, before he bumps into someone, or knocks something over,' she joked to herself, as she walked towards him.

"It's Charlie, isn't it?"

"That is correct, madam."

"My name is Michelle. Would you like to come over here," and she pointed to the desk behind her, where she operated from. "Take a seat, please, and I will get your details up."

Michele did not want to stare at him, so she picked up a brochure off a desk nearby, about Italy, and put it back on the shelf. She then followed the strange man over to where her computer terminal was situated. She was slightly on edge. This is when the training came in handy. The travel agent had always three important things to say to a client: 'Where are you wishing to go? Do you have a budget? Can you please give me the dates you wish to travel?'

Charlie loved to act like a celebrity to strangers and friends. It was as if he was being interviewed on national TV. After he sat down, he crossed his legs to hide any nerves, wiped some imaginary dust off his trousers, then he said assuredly, "Italy, my dear."

"Oh, I have just put the brochure back on the shelf. I will go and get it again."

In his best Italian accent, as she got up to go, Charlie said theatrically to her: "*Per andare a Milano, per favore,*" and waved a friendly hand towards her, as if saying goodbye.

When Charlie came back to his flat that day from the travel agency in town, he did what he always did: he flopped down on his favourite chair. Then he stared into the fake electric fire. He never switched it on though, or cleaned it, there were no bulbs in it anyway. It was always dusty and full of cigarette ash. The landline phone by his favourite chair was old-fashioned too; it had big numbers on it. He liked to keep it handy. It was still his main line to the outside world. It reminded him of a time gone by: a time when people phoned him. Charlie sitting comfortably there lit another cigarette, and drifted away into a relaxed state of pure bliss. He started thinking about the journey ahead of him, and all the people he would meet. As if leaving for the station, at that moment, he muttered to himself: "*Buon Vacanza.*"

Joan, later that day, was just about to sign out of her computer and go out for lunch. However, when she saw Charlie lifting the receiver, she stayed put and listened in to the call.

"That's fab! You are selling new samples, for the Zillion system. I use them for music production. Can you do a good deal

for me, before I go abroad? Great, you can give me a special price? Okay. How much.? So, it is cheaper to buy online? Okay, chum; I am just about to make another trip abroad, but will get back to you when I return. Ciao!"

It was all very strange, it was as if Charlie knew he was being watched and listened to. It was as if he was on stage, even when he was alone in his flat.

Joan thought it quite wonderful: "Good for you, Charlie boy: for today, we are indeed all under constant surveillance. Why not ham it up?"

There was another thing that attracted Joan to him. Even though they had never met, it was as if she had entered his consciousness. She found this mystical; life was strange she knew that much. At the moment, she was reading a book about parallel thoughts. Like many young people, Joan was trying to escape the control of the world. She knew he was trying to do the same thing. Charlie she knew was nearly fifty, yet he behaved like a teenager. She felt that his balance, and the way he now walked, had not changed him, even though it had changed others opinion of him. Last night on the computer, she accessed his medical records: 'damage has been done to his middle ear,' she read with interest.

"It must have been all that loud music in his teens, when he went to night clubs and rock concerts," she thought to herself.

Joan had to save him from Dexter. She knew he would be back at his flat again. Dexter had gone wrong for some reason; he hated Charlie now. There were many others in trouble, pursued by the Bureau. She knew that if you were not strong, the Bureau would take control of you. They had access to all computer networks. Fear of the unknown was their strongest card. It was natural to think that someone was watching you all the time, everywhere you went in the post computer world.

The fear that the Bureau knew where you were at any given moment of the day was very persuasive. They knew when you had sex, what you did in your office. It was compelling how they got inside of your mind. Everyone knew that as soon as you switched on a phone, or opened up a computer device, you were under

surveillance. And even if you never owned a computer, it was common knowledge that face recognition cameras were everywhere. They transmitted images to satellites. The satellites in turn passed the data to the Bureau. Many businesses could pay for these services, and did so.

Charlie took a final puff, before stubbing it out. Just then he heard the phone ring. He moved from his seat, switched off the second-hand TV, and before he sat back down picked up the old-fashioned receiver: "Comrade, Charlie, here!" he sang, in his best theatrical voice.

Joan could not of course hear the voice of the caller. She surmised that it was Dexter, wanting to meet him - she was right.

Charlie looked sad, after hearing who it was: "Right, I will be there; I will meet you inside the cafe bar at the station," he said, then he put the phone down.

Joan knew she had to follow Charlie; he was in trouble. She was sure Dexter was going to try to poison him again. She hacked his computer the other night, and found out that he had purchased, on the Dark Market, a special poison named coniine. She knew from experience how the Bureau disposed of people.

That day Charlie late in the afternoon went into the city centre, into the main train station to meet the man from the Bureau. This was the time when most of the office workers were heading home. Joan had come across him there many times before in the coffee shop inside the station. He always started off with an espresso coffee. He saw her of course at the counter, buying her caffe latte. She guessed he saw her that day as just another familiar figure in the city, someone who worked near the station. Joan kept her distance, out of the way. She knew that if he sat near someone, Charlie always started talking to them. This is what made him so attractive to her. He was not good looking; he had no real style, so to speak. However, he seemed to fit in wherever he went, as if everyone was his friend. Charlie empathised with most people, and he took a genuine interest in what they were up to, and where they were going. He was always on his own, but you could never say by looking at him that he was lonely.

Joan had a large extended family; many she knew were lonely. Some of them admitted this to her. It was always there in their eyes; she could see it for herself. To her, it was as if a lonely face always obeyed a stern command from a thought inside a solitary soul. This is how they reflected life within themselves to another. She did not like to see people lonely. Lack of hope, that's all loneliness was after all - was it not. That night, as she sipped her coffee, she watched the passengers walk through the main station. Her eye was drawn to men and women on their own, then she looked at some young couples, and then groups of threes and fours, young and middle aged. The elderly she knew avoided the rush hour. Joan came to the conclusion long ago that in the main the world was made up of twos, threes, and fours. Cam People she knew had to help the vulnerable who were on their own: for evil lurked everywhere in this world.

Unlike Joan, Charlie seemed to accept the evildoers as part of life. Everyone with a rail or bus ticket was a friend to him. Joan spotted an odd middle-aged looking man wandering around the station, who did not fit in with the pattern. Charlie stood out of course too: for he walked funny. The obvious conclusion was that he was drunk, or on drugs. As she clasped her warm coffee cup, she wondered about the girl he met a few years ago. She knew she lived in Croatia. Charlie had sent her money, even adopted a street child near her. He spoke about her, as if she was his adopted daughter. Joan felt it was the tragedy of life in Charlie's soul that made her like him. She hoped that she could set him free, like a trapped animal in the zoo.

Not long after sitting at the faraway wall inside the cafe bar, Joan noticed the cafe door open, and in came the man from the Bureau. He spotted Charlie by the window looking out at the travellers. He walked over and said, as he stood behind him: "Your fans are everywhere, Charlie boy?"

Dexter knew how to butter him up when he wanted to; he knew how to play the game. He knew how the media could fill wandering minds with worthless images and ideologies. It was as if the great and the good, they wrote about, at times appeared on the

street, inside cafe bars, and train stations. Common people had to be quick though to catch sight of them. Citizens knew they should not approach famous people, just stare at them. Charlie was different; he was a star, you could talk to him.

Many people lived their lives believing they were famous, when in actual fact only a handful of people had heard of them. Charlie was one of them. Dexter hated them all: the loved and the unloved, the famous and the forgotten. It was as if they were all acting out a part in their own film. Even though men and women fictionalised themselves, he had no sympathy for them. Dexter knew they did this to escape the mundane world around them. However, there was no way out of this world for them, or him. He knew that much. He cared little if they survived or not. In his mind, no one survived anyway. You had to live well when you were here, avoid becoming poor, and all the unwashed people that frequented the city every day.

Dexter had a large extended family; Charlie had no one. It was an unbalanced image when Joan thought about the two of them sitting together in the cafe bar. Both were Scots, both were unusual in their own right. One man was dressed in modern designer clothes, the other in old second-hand gear, from the charity shops. One man looked respectable; the other an outcast. One man looked out at the world and smiled, while the other stared, and showed no outward emotion at all.

Dexter was given some news from the hospital recently in an e-mail. Joan had not read the full report yet, but she could tell that it was serious. She would try to access his e-mail again next week. Was he trying to kill Charlie, before he died? There was something wrong with him. The world was not a friendly place for him anymore. Life was not for the living.

Charlie, as usual, was chatting up the waitress. She liked art, she told him. Of course, he did too. He thought she could enquire about buying a flat, rather than rent one, while she was working here in Glasgow. Joan made a guess and thought she was from Sweden. She was picking things up off the empty tables. It was just at the tall table by the window, next to where Charlie was sitting

that a piece of paper fell onto the ground. It looked like a receipt. Charlie got off the high seat and went after her. He put it on her tray along with the other rubbish there: "I used to be a road sweeper, you know," he said, winked at her, then laughed.

Charlie had his back to the cafe window. He was now looking at the waitress, smiling at her, as if waiting for a kiss. Behind his back, Joan watched Dexter. Quite innocently, he looked out at the commuters inside the station area, as he poured some clear liquid into Charlie's coffee cup. When Charlie went back to his table, she wondered what to do, scream out: "Don't drink the coffee, Charlie!"

However, luck was on his side again. Charlie when he returned to his table, took his cup to the counter, and said: "Can I have a cup of tea, instead - too much caffeine today."

Dexter looked down at his mobile phone, coolly picked it up as if searching for a text message. He showed no emotion. Then he went back to the ordinary everyday world around him, as if nothing had happened. Charlie had escaped once more.

Joan would stay and keep watch on Charlie. She was not to meet John until half past nine tonight, after he finished work. She checked his cam to see what he was up to. On her phone, Joan could see him working away in the office. "Better not bother him," she thought, "I will update him tonight in bed."

Joan put away her iPhone, grabbed her shoulder bag, and as she moved towards the door of the cafe to exit it, she listened in to their conversation. She could hear them, but not what they were talking about - just a word here and there. Joan stood outside and looked up at the information board, as if catching a train somewhere. She noticed their meeting broke up a few minutes later. Joan watched the two men leave the cafe bar, go out, and like her, stand on the concourse. Charlie seemed to be pleading with Dexter. Eventually, Dexter walked away from him.

As Joan walked along she looked up at the CCTV in the station. She thought about John and how he had once hacked into their system. He used to search all sorts of sites. He had thankfully stopped watching rich women, who lived in grand houses. At that

time, John could not stop watching them on his computer. She remembered him saying to her, it was strange how all the women would shut their curtains around the same time at night, undress, and get out their vibrators to stimulate themselves. She off course did not realise that John was trying to trace an old acquaintance. This came to light after she confronted him about spending so much time on his computer. She sobered him up that time by reminding him about how the government had just passed a new legislation, increasing the sentence for anyone caught invading a fellow citizen's privacy. You got a minimum of five years for hacking these days. - just about the same for killing someone.

Chapter 10

Charlie was fed up today. However, his mood changed as soon as he opened the white envelope from London. "Ah, the train tickets," he whooped. As he took them out of the wallet, he immediately checked the date, and the time of departure. He could see everything was in order: Glasgow to London, the Eurostar to Paris, and then the TGV train from Paris to Milan: "Fantastic!"

Charlie knew that as he travelled through the world, he escaped it. Like every other trip, he knew he would be the star of this travelling show; every person he met on route would recognise this. The pop music that he knew so well would unite everyone on his journey. Joan understood that he was not a good judge of character, neither with residents nor foreigners. Just recently, he invited a young couple home. They were soon off with his benefit money, before he could do anything. The couple came from Belgium - well that is what they told Charlie. They got to know him after meeting him in the coffee house inside the station.

Charlie on hearing that they had no hotel, and had just arrived in his home city, invited them to stay the night at his place. They were quite young; this did not worry him. Joan that night watched them on the webcam go through his pockets when he was

asleep. Everyone slept in the living room, after drinking beer and smoking joints. Charlie did not mind sleeping in his favourite armchair.

They left soon after breakfast. Charlie did not realise until he went to the bank in the afternoon that day that all his credit cards had vanished. His travel agent was the one he confessed this incident to. He phoned him to tell him that he had received his tickets. "It was a really good scam," he admitted, without any malice in his voice, "They were really smart, you know, professional."

This was such a strange thing for others to understand: Charlie did not like to criticise people, even those who have done him wrong.

He may have seemed carefree, but Charlie was worried about going into a care home. Even on the webcam, Joan could see this. She knew the procedure, how they worked at the Bureau. What would follow would be an eviction order, after a final offer to go into a home was sent to him. If he did not sign the form, then he would be forgotten about. Very few survived outside the state system. 'If some disease does not get you, then some angry beggar will,' is how it was viewed by people in the know.

Charlie was highly strung. This was another thing that drew her closer to him. She had once had a friend at school who was the same. The girl she remembered had been put out of her home, by her parents; for shouting and screaming. She lost touch with her after this.

Charlie did have one professional friend. This was the record company man who now and again called to see him at his flat. His name was Silvio; that's all she knew about him. He was an Italian man living in Britain. She knew by reading Charlie's emails that he worked in the music industry, for an international corporate label. Just last week, she overheard Charlie talking about him to a friend on the phone. His female friend who came from Croatia told him that she was a good singer. Charlie was trying to get her a record deal, and a presence on the radio. "There is no chance of that," Silvio told him, "unless you are celebrity material, you will never

appear on the radio or TV. That is why your friend will never get on the radio," he told him bluntly.

Joan took this to be how it was. She admitted to John that she did not understand how the industry worked. It seemed to her brutal but nice. Even though this was the case. Charlie still sounded confident. "I know someone in the industry; he owes me big time." was how he put it to his friend from Dubrovnik, in an e-mail.

Nothing of course came of it - nothing ever did. Nevertheless, Charlie genuinely felt part of the entertainment industry, even though he was a complete outsider. That night around ten o'clock, when no one was around, Charlie undressed. He usually wandered around the house for a good hour naked. Joan knew his figure well. It was a familiar shape to her that digitally moved around inside her device. Joan loved to watch him. His slender body, mangled, twisted this way, then that, as if by an angry foe. He was a simple soul. She often remembered that when she was in high school, her friend Teresa and her would go online, and interact with men. The men were always from other countries. The girls usually wandered around the bedroom naked. Sometimes they would dance and sing.

You saw very few faces on the cam sites these days, due to the software for facial recognition. It was widely available to everyone. People could buy it and target others by using it. They used to have great fun back then. When she switched off her computer, no one bothered her. Joan sitting in her flat wondered where Teresa was now. The last time she heard anything was that she had gone to London to work for an antique dealer.

Joan a long time ago had come to the conclusion that life was nothing to do with her. She felt very much at home watching people on cams. It started out by watching sex online, then her fascination gravitated to following people in their homes. Ordinary lives were extraordinary to her. It was not like television; for that was in the main contrived and controlled. Watching people in their own homes was wonderful. Due to the fact, that she now worked for an international webcam company, she felt entitled to

do this. After all, she may just be checking the settings to their account.

Joan liked the idea of being a guardian angel to her clients. She would never tell on them, what they did, and what they said. The information she received was for her own understanding. Life was a wonderful mystery, no one really understood it; she knew that much. How some people lived was extraordinary indeed. In the flat, she shared with John, they had cameras in every room, except the bathroom and the bedroom. This was what most people had now. You bought the cam and downloaded the app. All the webcams they sold, linked into their servers. At night, you went on-line and saw what others were up to.

While wandering around the town, Charlie would see faces on the streets, he recognised from the cafe bars, restaurants, and pubs. He thought them the guardians of the city. He did not know them by name, but he knew they - like him - were part of the city. He could tell this, by the way they acted. Foreigners he could see were everywhere in the city too. They floated through the Glasgow streets with ease and impunity, due to new ongoing immigration laws. That wasn't always the case. Charlie remembered fondly when he first went to the bars and clubs in the city, and how different it was then. Although society had changed, he still felt part of the never-ending teen generation. Unlike others of his generation he had not moved on.

Every day, Charlie watched young couples go by him, arm in arm, as if they had always been like that. Sometimes he smiled at them. That was the way the world operated; life he knew favoured the young. He was well out of his teens now, but he did not think himself as a middle-aged man - heaven forbid a square. Although Charlie boy was a travelling artist, he could not understand the ordinary ongoing tattoo revolution. Some beautiful young women even got their boobs tattooed. It was as if they did this as a mark of rebellion against the world. However, this did not bother him.

What Charlie liked most of all was to stop somewhere, sit down and have a smoke. Joan could not understand this. He smoked a lot in his flat. The smoking ban had been in forced in

pubs and cafes for many years now. He did not seem to pay any heed to the health warning on the packets.

One thing about Charlie, he stayed clear of trouble. He knew he could not runaway from it any longer. His balance seemed to have got worse over the last year. Lucky for him he looked like a tramp, and people usually ignored his faults. Joan, as she watched him, wondered about his past. She knew that he must have memories, thoughts about his mum and dad, childhood friends, though she had never heard him talk about them to anyone. It seemed he had reinvented himself as a world traveller. He was certainly a friend of any tired soul looking for a bed for the night. Young people liked him. They could see that although he was unkempt, he was kind and would help them.

Of course, when it came to sizing each other up, Charlie was not one for eye contact, or bonding in the usual way: going to night clubs or bars with them. He told people that he did not drink anymore - that was not true. He did not drink in public. He also told people that he did not take drugs. When his record company friend Silvio called to see him at his flat; he usually left some cocaine and hashish for Charlie. "From the doctor," he would always say to him, and tap his nose.

The way people behaved did not seem to bother Charlie; everyone to him seemed to be part of a modern society. This was not the case for Joan and John. They were the new touch generation, get in and get out as quickly as possible, leave no trace of your data. They did not have anything to do with the online world. They understood it; they watched it. It was a plaything for bored adolescents; anyone who took the Internet serious was in trouble. Governments now controlled their citizens by its use. The Bureau, where Dexter worked, was just part of that network. You could be free from all external control if you understood the online world. You may indeed be observed, but you did not let that bother you. Many people in society were starting to wear camouflage clothing; face masks, wigs and beards were very popular. Your phone of course could point to where you were at any given moment.

The new touch generation maintained that you were only free if you could laugh at anyone tracking you. You did not let them inside your imaginary world. The online world was superficial; it should remain that way. Your life was real and wonderful. There were of course ways around being tracked. You were free if you could escape the control of others; no one knew your thoughts. This was something to cherish. Freedom was to be free of all external control. You paid your taxes, phone rental, shopping bills. The new touch generation did everything on line, but they moved back into the real world as quickly as possible, so as not to be part of it. They used an encrypted operating system to protect their privacy and anonymity.

Charlie was not of the computer generation, so online surveillance did not bother him. Like most people, he was proficient, and could use a computer without too much bother. However, on the question of Internet surveillance; he never gave it a thought. Therefore, he was not controlled by it. He knew about it of course from the press. Charlie was controlled by the illusions within society, mixed in with music, fashion and art.

Joan downloaded his latest album. She thought the title interesting. He had turned reality into art. The album was called: Wall of Fun. It was a strange album. She laughed when she heard him singing in a high falsetto voice. He was such a funny man.

Joan, just before going to bed that night, opened her computer. She looked at the footage, in the cloud. The message there indicated that the old woman with the tartan shawl had a visitor. She opened the file and watched the movie. It was recorded at two pm. The old woman opened the door and invited a lady from the Bureau in. She was dressed like a mannequin:

"Oh, it's you, come in."

"How are you?"

"Not bad, go through to the living room."

"Are you keeping well?"

"Would you like a cup of tea?"

"No thanks, you just sit down, and take it easy."

"That's all I can do"

"So how are you getting on."

"Not bad, is not good."

" Watch yourself now."

"How is the office."

"It's quite busy."

"Oh, good."

"Does anyone come to see you?"

"You said last time, it was a boy, your daughter had."

"Yes, does anyone come to see you?"

"How is the new baby. He will be lovely."

"He is fine."

"What was his weight?"

"Seven pounds."

"A big lad!"

"No, he is tiny."

"What's his name?"

"Billy."

"Lovely"

"He's got a wee tuft of hair."

Joan was about to give up on the mundane conversation when she heard the old woman say:

"He is a bad man!"

"Who is?"

"He is working for them."

"Do you know him?"

" I know him all right. Like you he works for the Bureau?"

"Oh."

The Bureau, Joan knew had their operators everywhere. They were obviously targeting the old woman now, as well as single men. They got them separated from family and friends, pretty quickly, and dealt with them accordingly. The money of course going back into the state coffers - job done.

She must try to get the woman some help. She knew that she could use her iPad. Someone had set up cams for her, but whoever it was had disappeared. Thankfully, they were still running, although the old woman had probably forgotten all about them.

She was similar to Charlie. The old woman wandered around in the buff sometimes. She was like a wee gorilla. The great thing about her was that she always sang to herself. This was the way to escape the control of the state. They did not know how to deal with happy people. They tried to control the elderly and the infirm via television. They knew the world was a desperate place that would depress anyone.

What kind of report would the mannequin from the Bureau send in to the boss? Was the old woman in the tartan shawl ready for state intervention? Mercifully, the workers were not all mad like Dexter. Although, Joan had come across some queer Bureau men and women before. They had little sympathy for the infirm. They locked their clients out of their homes. When they appealed, they sent them to care homes. Their tactics varied. Many people who worked for the Bureau had shares in care homes.

"I will need to tell John about the meeting, when he comes in," thought Joan, as she deleted the movie file on her laptop.

The following day,, Charlie got an e-mail from the Bureau. He expected it: for he refused point blank to go along to the Wall of Fun. The letter stated that his monthly allowance would be stopped at the end of the month. The day after, he phoned his record company friend, Silvio. Joan listened in to the call.

"I need a favour, Silvio; I am being targeted by the Bureau."

Thereafter, he did not hang about, Charlie went abroad on his prearranged trip. When he returned at the end of the month, he cleared his flat. Charlie was not seen after this on any Glasgow street. However, Joan did not forget Charlie. Every day she kept an eye out for him, incase he returned. She would always help Charlie, and others, if and when she could. She never forgot the promise John and her made, when they first met. All she had to do was look up at the pictorial calendar above her desk; for there it is written in red ink: "Cam People love to help those in need."



Download Wall of Fun album:

Listen to Wall of Fun (Original) by JWYOU on Apple Music.

<https://music.apple.com/gb/album/wall-of-fun-original/976222477>

<https://open.spotify.com/album/6RjCeX6vtBoEDqr3zSHz2y?nd=1>

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Wall-Fun-Original-Jwyou/dp/B00UO1FW08/ref=sr_1_3?

[s=dmusic&ie=UTF8&qid=1432479048&sr=1-3&keywords=Wall+of+Fun](#)

<https://walkerjohna.wordpress.com/about/>

:Track-list and lyrics

1. Welcome to the Wall of Fun

2 Can't Wait forever

3 Time for Love

4 No Fear

5. Wall of Fun (Part two)

6. Playing with hatred

7. I was wrong

8. Men without mothers

9. Return to You

10. Falling through Life

WELCOME TO THE WALL OF FUN

When you have lived too long,
We'll look after you.
You have thought your life was old,
But we will make it new.
Love the state and all our friends,
We will pull you through.
Don't despair sign right here,
We'll take care of you.
God bless the Queen, and all her ministers.
Welcome to the Wall of Fun,
You look amazing you do.

Song written and produced by John A.Walker, 2015
Release date: 2015, Copyright John A.Walker (JWYOU)
Album: Wall of Fun
Cosmos Original Records PPL member

CAN'T WAIT FOREVER

Tick tock, step aside,
Down here, follow the line.
I can't wait forever,
You know how this life,
can come crashing down.
Best not to think at all,
Stay safe and sound.
Take him to the top,
Move him to the side,
Make sure he knows his lines.
Long, tall, or short,
That looks fine,
Stand in line.
Crazy for love,
Crazy for life,
When you hit the wall,
Close your eyes.

Song written and produced by John A.Walker, 2015

Release date: 2015, Copyright John A.Walker (JWYOU)

Album: Wall of Fun

Cosmos Original Records PPL member

TIME FOR LOVE

A familiar figure walks through a crowded street,
He's acting strange, like an acid freak.
She watches him through the camera,
He laughs and jokes,
Unaware of her.
Maybe one day they will meet.
It's time for love.
No one in the world now can hide away,
With society surveillance everywhere,
They want control of you day and night,
All creatures in the world,
They must divide.
Falling stars though will collide.

Song written and produced by John A.Walker, 2015
Release date: 2015, Copyright John A.Walker (JWYOU)
Album: Wall of Fun
Cosmos Original Records PPL member

NO FEAR

In life there are many secrets,
Hidden voices, so deceitful,
Sick minds, alter egos.
Some working for the money,
Others for political people.
White girl, or boy negro,
No, fear, I have no fear.
Listen to me now all you people,
Remember in life render good for evil.
Most people, they are just crazy,
They love talking, but they are lazy,
Wonder why they keep you waiting.
There words will try and phase you.
Breaking news now on the radio,
Man's been killed - I don't need you.

Song written and produced by John A.Walker, 2015
Release date: 2015, Copyright John A.Walker (JWYOU)
Album: Wall of Fun
Cosmos Original Records PPL member

WALL OF FUN (part 2)

Can't seem to find my way,
Love is not my destiny,
No friends now girls or boys,
Now that I am on my own.
No dreams left in side of me,
I'm not afraid to say goodbye,
It's easy to turn your back on reality,
When you know life is a lie.
The Wall of Fun,
Take me to the,
Wall of Fun,
I know that is what I want.
Deep down my thoughts are still,
I see time recurring at will,
No start. no end. no middle,
A world at war, crushed by evil.

Song written and produced by John A.Walker, 2015
Release date: 2015, Copyright John A.Walker (JWYOU)
Album: Wall of Fun
Cosmos Original Records PPL member

PLAYING WITH HATRED

They walk the streets everyday,
Putting letters into doorways,
The revolution is on its way,
Mind games wanna play.
Children's future is made today,
Party people they vote one way,
You make life not worthwhile,
Then you are gone.
You are playing with hatred,
Yes, you are.
False dreams and promises,
There is no way I can hide away,
The sickness is conditioned in your mind.
It's the death of certainty,
There is no time to runaway,
They know your name,
Where you stay, who you are.

Song written and produced by John A.Walker, 2015
Release date: 2015, Copyright John A.Walker (JWYOU)
Album: Wall of Fun
Cosmos Original Records PPL member

I WAS WRONG

There is no rhyme nor reason,
Why life is false, so weird,
Now that I have clear vision,
It's plain I can see.
How can you hold back feelings,
Your heart is ever beating,
Love is what you are needing,
Now that you can say.
I was wrong.
Holding back love,
Holding back words.
All life is really crazy,
Foreign girls like misbehaving,
Big eyes, beautiful lady,
Don't you know, love is a dream.

Song written and produced by John A.Walker, 2015
Release date: 2015, Copyright John A.Walker (JWYOU)
Album: Wall of Fun
Cosmos Original Records PPL member

MEN WITHOUT MOTHERS

When I was with you,
Love was always there,
I dreamed of freedom,
Life without a care.
Now mother has passed to heaven,
There is no one there.
And when the dream goes,
I hope you will be there.
Men without mothers,
We are everywhere.
Mary sat at the window,
now she's not there.
Mother has passed to heaven,
There's no one there.
And all the people,
they just look and stare.
They may have known her,
but they don't really care.
Mother has passed to heaven,
There is no one there.

Song written and produced by John A.Walker, 2015
Release date: 2015, Copyright John A.Walker (JWYOU)
Album: Wall of Fun
Cosmos Original Records PPL member

RETURN TO YOU

Lonely people, they are never free,
They are captured by a certain honesty.
Dreams fall like stars, but there are thorns.
All life is strange, just you wait and see,
Mother who danced, has now disappeared.
And one by one, we all must go.
I will return to you one day.
In my thoughts, lie my eternal prayers.
When I was young, I stood upon your knee,
Weightlifter boy,
But you just laughed at me.
A woman's thoughts, I did learn.
And now the time has come for me to go,
into a world, that I do not know.
Can I survive along that road.
I will return to you one day,
In my thoughts, lie my eternal prayers.

Song written and produced by John A.Walker, 2015
Release date: 2015, Copyright John A.Walker (JWYOU)
Album: Wall of Fun
Cosmos Original Records PPL member

FALLING THROUGH LIFE

Walking to the Dripps today,
To the cottage where they stayed.
I have come to see this hallowed place,
Where as children, they did stay.
Maybe I will find the crystal set,
or the cloth left by the gate.
I know that they have all gone,
to the city beyond the sun.
I am falling through my life.
And now, I'm left here on my own,
Sister left ages ago.
No love there, just broken thorns,
Endless screams. a strange divorce.
I'm falling, through my life.

Song written and produced by John A.Walker, 2015
Release date: 2015, Copyright John A.Walker (JWYOU)
Album: Wall of Fun
Cosmos Original Records PPL member